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Verses

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF

WALDO LEE McATEE

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PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR
WASHINGTON, D. C.
1920

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DEC 17 1920

no 1

SHB 22 Dec. 1920.

PS 3525
A. 116 V4
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A PEACEFUL ROOM

“For solitude is thought, and to think is to live.”

—*Jeffery Farnol.*

From folk and fuss you guard me well,
Give me unbroken peace;
The rain may pour, the storm may blow,
Your comfort does not cease.

Your four good walls shut out the world,
Its bustle and its strife,
And give me boon of solitude
And thought which is real life.

Within them I can hide away,
Unknown, unsought, alone;
My brain can glow with thoughts that flow
With naught to mar their tone.

Anon a verse, anon a tale
You've helped me to create,
And I assure you now, dear room,
My gratitude is great.

SOMEONE

Yes, I am looking again,
Forgive me if I seem to stare,
Some things about you amaze me—
Those curls and the sheen of your hair.
Forgive me the worse fault of gazing
Not for your sake but my own,
For you and your ways so remind me
Of another, a distant someone.

Oh, of someone, someone,
Someone who is blithe and gay,
Whose elfin self all my thought claims
Where e'er and what e'er the day;
Someone who puzzles yet pleases,
Now so brave, now very shy,
Someone who is most alluring,
Someone I'd love to call mine.

That arch look once again,
Dimple once more just the same,
So like you are, and so sweet, ah
You seem her almost but the name.
But should be false my remembrance
And the years all my dreams have undone,
Let me begin to adore you
And make you my only someone.

Oh, my someone, someone,
Someone who is blithe and gay,
Whose elfin self all my thought claims
Where e'er and what e'er the day;
Someone who puzzles yet pleases,
Now so brave, now very shy,
Someone who is most alluring,
Someone I'd love to call mine.

A MIRROR

What think you smiles when you smile into it,
And laughs with you when you are glad,
Reflects your concern, if only a bit,
And mourns with you when you are sad?

The *mirror* you think of is not in my mind,
No, it's one beyond skill of mere art.
To your look, or your mood, it never is blind,
The face of your loving sweetheart.

TO THE ARBUTUS

Tiny flushed star of the springtime,
Bravely you defy the cold;
Despite the hardships of winter
You have prepared to unfold.

Lovely your trusses of blossoms
Under your rich leaves so green;
Lovelier still is your fragrance,
Dainty, delicious and keen.

Thrilling the soul with emotion,
Oh the heart-strings that you tie
Of fond ones who joyously seek you,
One breath, and "I love you," they sigh.

Your pretty cup is the sweetest
In all of the springtime's array;
Gladly we own that we owe you
For what we pledged on that day.

I CAN'T GET MARRIED TILL THE NEXT
PEACH TIME

[An American Folk Song.]

Oh Silas and Reuben,
And you Tommy too,
Don't you come a'courtin'
Till mother tells you to—

For I am too little,
And I am too young,
And I ain't quite ready
For to marry you;
I can't get married
Till the next peach time,
And the peach tree
Ain't in blossom yet.

Who she tells the first,
And who she tells the last,
I don't care a straw
For that won't tie me fast—

For I am too little,
And I am too young,
And I ain't quite ready
For to marry you;
I can't get married
Till the next peach time,
And the peach tree
Ain't in blossom yet.

There's just one I'll have
And lots of 'em I won't,
Come they all a'courtin'
I'll have to tell 'em don't—

And say: I am too little,
And I am too young,
And I ain't quite ready
For to marry you;
I can't get married
Till the next peach time,
And the peach tree
Ain't in blossom yet.

When the good time comes
And the moon is right,
Tommy dear I'll say
Let it be tonight—

For I'm grown up now
And I ain't too young,
And I'm every bit ready
For to marry you;
We'll be gettin' married
In the old peach time,
And the fruit's lots sweeter
Than the flowers I'll bet.

A MEMORY RHYME

Sugar, salt, and indigo;
Sugar, salt, and indigo.

Thus I sang it as I ran,
Sent as mother's little man,
To the store for thus and so
In the days so long ago.

Surely other things were bought,
But of these I recall naught;
Recall singing, as I ran,
Proud as mother's little man,
Just the refrain I now know
Running in my memory so:

Sugar, salt, and indigo;
Sugar, salt, and indigo.

VOICES OF THE MARCH WIND

Oh you frowsy, drowsy trees,
Hark to me!
Hark to me!
Hear my roaring,
Spring rains pouring,
You must hark to me.
Hard it is to wake you,
Hard then must I shake you.
Winter goes. Awake!

Oh ye timid little flowers,
List to me!
List to me!
Hear my humming,
Spring is coming,
Listen well to me.
Lift up your sleepy heads,
Rise from your leafy beds,
Spring comes. Awake!

THE HILLS

Oh where but in the rolling hills
Is every view a picture grand,
That charms, that thrills, that teaches so
The splendid beauty of the land?

Where ranked in ample swelling waves
The many smoothly turf-clad mounds
In-fold the flocks that peacefully
O'er-graze their terraced rounds.

In lands atilt the eye is drawn
To beauties on the plain concealed,
As ribbons brown of new-turned earth
Athwart the yellow-stubbed field.

Where brown meets blue so near at hand
One oft may see against the skies
The striving men, and plodding teams,
Outlined in true heroic guise.

And higher where the marching trees
Attempt to scale the rocky crest,
There beauty, quiet, solace, peace
Will woo the cares from any breast.

A ROAD THROUGH SOUTHERN PINES

O long, soft-floored, mysterious aisle,
Neath thy many-columned, piney vault
Which stirs like a heaving bosom, as the wind
Forever whispers, "I love you, leaves, I love";
Where, as I walk, the long soft needles of a droop-
ing branch
Brush my cheek, like the touch of a woman's hair,
Grateful to you am I, for your stillness,
In which the low chatter of the wren
Is a startling, though not discordant note.
My harsh step brings no protest
From the leafy carpet; I am free
To walk my humor out,
By action quench the ardor that consumes me.
Quench? did I say? Ah me!
Thy very sweetness further crowds my breast
With that tense pressure constant ever
In a heart which love has claimed. To some,
indeed,
It may in breaking yield the world's best prize;
Denied relief, my o'er-full heart would burst
But for thy healing balm, O peaceful woods.

THE TRYST OF A-LAN AND LIN-FU.

LIN-FU. (*On steps of a lightly built shrine.*)

O Beauteous morn!

That brings to me my sweet, my loved A-lan,
Thy wondrous brightness pales beside the light
Of her dear eyes. Her face exceeds
In beauty e'en the rose, her breath the sweet
Violet itself would sweeten. Ah I know
A-lan is fairer far than words can tell,
Yet she is mine. What joy! How I am blessed,
With love of one who excels loveliness!
This day the happiest of life will be,
For will not she her dear self give to me?
Inside this shrine we meet, ah dear A-lan,
I go and wait thy coming, heart on fire.

(*Enters temple, after a little sits down, leans
against the altar and sleeps.*)

(*Some time later, on temple steps, appears
A-lan.*)

A-LAN.

Lin-fu, Lin-fu,

You must be there. Oh heart be still, I fear,
I fear I will be seen. Unmaidenly
Am I, but love, love brings me here. Lin-fu,
Beloved, I come, but please be there, don't fail.

(*Enters shrine, sees the sleeping youth.*)

He sleeps! Oh has he ceased to care for me,
Am I no more than that to him, that he
Can sleep at this set time, of days, the day?

(Extends arms toward him.)

I love, but dare not clasp, 'twould be too bold.
Lin-fu, of all the dearest, yet you sleep,
How can you thus forget our tryst, our love?
I'll leave a pledge to show that I am true.

(Fastens bangle on his breast.)

This bangle you admired in childhood days.
Another day now dear must we await,
Another day, would it were now, Lin-fu!

(She leaves. Later Lin-fu awakes.)

LIN-FU:

I've slept. Ah curse the lover who can sleep
When he awaits his heart's beloved prize.
A-lan, ah dear, why don't you come. My heart—

(Gesture.)

What's this, this bangle— Then she has been here.
Woe, woe that I should sleep,

(Runs about searching.)

and she is gone.

A-lan, the prize I've sought my whole life long,
Has come, has gone, is lost. Oh heart now break,
No longer seems my life worth while to keep.
Ye gods! Your help! I seek the endless sleep.

*(Scatters the sacred flame, firing the flimsy
temple and perishes in its midst, crying:)*

A-lan, my love of all on earth the best,
I go, I go, may you be ever blest.

(A-lan at a window in her home.)

A-LAN:

What's that? Oh heart, I fear to think I see
What I do see. The temple burns, Lin-fu,
Awake! Oh do rush forth. Let me but see
You once. Oh fly unto these arms, that should
On sight have clasped you. Woe, woe, it falls,
There he must be. I could have saved him—
Unmaidenly—Oh faugh! I should have dared
For Lin-fu anything. I would, I would, indeed,
If—if— Then do it now, A-lan.

(Takes from case on wall a sword.)

This sword

The honor of thy line embodies. Shrink not,
'Tis sharp, but dull beside the pain, Lin-fu,
You suffered for my faithlessness. Now seek
The heart that was afraid to show its love,
But love that greater could not be, Lin-fu, Lin-fu.

(Falls on sword and dies.)

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